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To: Microsoft ATR
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Subject: Microsoft Settlement

The proposed settlement with Microsoft is ridiculous. Microsoft has shone again and again that it DOES NOT follow the rules. They always find a loophole. They released their most anti-competitive OS ever, Windows XP, during the antitrust case. Windows XP forces casual users to buy new software - it suggests Microsoft software of course. If you open any older applications, it presents a dialog box telling you that it may be unstable and that they should upgrade. I have never found this statement to be true. I helped a woman who was in fits over those dialog boxes. Power users and computer consultants know to delve deeper. There is a button that disables the messages and lets you use the software you already own; but most casual users are startled by the warning and just stop using their software. During the antitrust case, Microsoft also removed Java from their OS, thus preventing much cross-platform software from flourishing. They are effectively requiring that if you want to develop for Windows, you must develop programs that run ONLY on Windows, using Microsoft tools of course. What company will develop cross-platform software in Java if they know it won't run under XP without serious user intervention? Companies deciding between Java and C# will be more likely to use C# - creating yet another piece of software that runs only on Windows and reducing the appeal of other operating systems. Microsoft also released a new version of their Internet Explorer web browser that is incompatible with software developed for other browsers or by other companies. Eventually, other companies were able to rewrite their software to be compatible, but not until Microsoft had embedded their own software using the knowledge that other companies would need to learn the new API whereas Microsoft wrote the API. For example, the new Explorer broke compatibility with Apple's cross-platform multi-media standard Quicktime. Of course compatibility with Microsoft's own competing Windows Media player was never broken. Quicktime is a free and open standard that has lost popularity because of this.

Microsoft IS anti-competitive. The courts agree. Competing developers have known this for a decade. They have not obeyed previous anti-trust rulings. They created more anti-competitive software during the current anti-trust case. The pattern will not stop until Microsoft is either broken up or has their charter revoked. If they were broken up, competitors like Apple would not have to compete against Microsoft developing plug-ins for their own software before anyone else can as they did with Windows Media Player in Internet Explorer. My favorite remedy, but an unlikely one considering Microsoft's massive campaign contributions to both parties is for their charter to be revoked. Yes, their charter should be revoked. The source code should be put in the public domain. In that upheaval, dozens instead of hundreds of other

companies would be given the chance to flourish. Microsoft is like a giant tree overshadowing hundreds of saplings. Pruning the behemoth (breking them up) would help a little, but cutting the whole tree down would let everyone compete on an even playing field.

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